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Senate Democrats Reject Proposals to Stop Campaign Corruption, Increase Transparency in Oregon Government

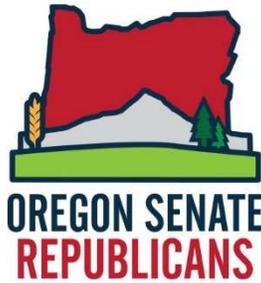
Salem, Ore. - Today, Senate Democrats rejected a common-sense proposal to stop pervasive corruption in Oregon government. The bill would have outlawed campaign kickbacks for elected officials who negotiate pay raises with public employees or other organizations that in turn reward the official with a campaign contribution. A motion to pull SJR 205 to the floor failed on a party-line vote.

"Once again, Democrats fail to practice what they preach: while showering Oregonians with lofty rhetoric about cracking down on ethics failures in state government, they unanimously vote to reject making campaign contribution kickbacks illegal," explained Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R - John Day). "This bill would have been a major step toward restoring the public's trust in our elected officials. Instead, Democrats chose to retain their ability to leverage pay raises for campaign contributions."

A motion to consider a second bill that would have required legislators to attach their name to legislative amendments also failed on a party-line vote. SB 1560, sponsored by Senator Alan Olsen (R-Canby), would have prevented legislators from anonymously submitting amendments to bills. A recently created loophole in the Senate Rules allows legislators to hide behind anonymous committee requests by signing a form to omit their name from their amendment.

"For the fifth time, Senate Democrats decided they prefer anonymity over transparency," said Olsen. "The public deserves to have full access to the bills and amendments their elected officials propose. This is another step backwards in our quest to restore transparency and accountability to the legislative body."

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